RESEARCH PROPOSAL FOR TOPIC APPROVAL
TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF MUMBAI
FOR THE PHD DEGREE
IN THE SUBJECT OF COMMERCE (BUSINESS POLICY AND ADMINISTRATION)

Title of the topic	**A STUDY ON CONSUMER EXPERIENCE OF ONLINE SHOPPING VIA SMART PHONES IN URBAN AREA FOR PERSONAL CARE PRODUCTS**
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5th Apr 2023

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OUTLINE PLAN FOR THE RESEARCH STUDY

FOR APPROVAL OF THE TOPIC FOR THE THESIS FOR
ADMISSION AS A POST GRADUATE STUDENT
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN THE SUBJECT OF COMMERCE
BUSINESS POLICY AND ADMINISTRATION
OF UNIVERSITY OF MUMBAI
ON

A STUDY ON CONSUMER EXPERIENCE OF ONLINE SHOPPING VIA SMART PHONES IN URBAN AREA FOR PERSONAL CARE PRODUCTS

BY

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UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF

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Research Student

Research Guide

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1. INTRODUCTION

Marketing is all about getting and keeping your consumer. Every business journey begins and ends with consumer. A consumer can turn down your business by simply buying a product from your competitor. Understanding Consumer behaviour today is of great relevance. What a consumer likes today will not remain same. With every change in trend consumer's taste, likes, preferences may change. It is the job of the businesses to keep track of the changing trends and meet the needs of consumer. Businesses today not just focuses on fulfilling the demand of consumers but also makes sure to satisfy the consumers by providing high end purchase experience.

Consumer experience basically gives a holistic view about consumer satisfaction and their expectations in future while shopping. Consumer experience narrows down the concept of consumer behaviour as to how a consumer typically feels while purchasing a particular product. It also gives an understanding of consumer touch points influencing the purchase. A good consumer experience will always lead to repeat purchase and brand loyalty. Consumer experience is getting better and better over the last few years with the advent of Internet and Smart Phones.

Internet users can choose from various online platforms to browse, compare, and purchase the items or services they need. Like many other industries, the retail landscape has undergone a substantial transformation following the advent of the internet, and thanks to the ongoing digitalization of modern life, consumers from virtually every country now profit from the perks of online transactions. As internet access and adoption are rapidly increasing worldwide, the number of digital buyers keeps climbing every year. The Indian E-commerce industry has been on an upward growth trajectory and is expected to surpass the US to become the second-largest e-commerce market in the world by 2034. India's e-commerce sector is expected to reach US$ 111.40 billion by 2025 from US$ 46.20 billion in 2020, growing at a 19.24%. Out of the total online market share FMCG products market share was 5.1% in 2018 and it is expected to grow to 10% by 2025.

Indian FMCG sector cannot be ignored as middle-class category are the main buyers and contributing to Indian GDP. FMCG are non-durable products that need to be sold, usually at a low cost, and consumed within a set duration. FMCG products are

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goods that are meant for immediate consumption by the average consumer. They are day-to-day items that are purchased recurrently by consumers. It is an industry where competitiveness is one way to thrive, by offering various alternatives and choices for the consumer to choose from. These goods are often divided into categories, owing to their shelf-life. They include processed goods like cheese, cereals etc. and prepared meals that are ready to eat and/or frozen food that is heated at the time of consumption. Beverages, baked goods, cleaning products and personal care products like shampoos, skin creams, cosmetics facial tissue, cleansing pods, shaving creams, lotions etc

The Personal Care industry is rising rapidly especially post Covid 19, as people are now inclined to better hygiene to keep oneself safe from germs and infections. Consumers are very particular today with respect to self-grooming and maintaining presentable appearance. Hence, personal care products like skin creams, cosmetics, hair appliances, deodorants, make up are on high demand. Consumers in Urban areas are now fully shopping personal care products online on regular basis. For easy and hassle free shopping consumers use Smart phones for browsing variety of personal care products which makes the shopping experience convenient and quick.

Smart Phones not only are handy but also a mini computer which encompasses all the features required for online shopping-commerce companies are also creating user friendly mobile software for online shopping for better consumer experience. Smart Phones are helping the busy working class in urban area to shop online at their convenience.

Drivers of Online Shopping in urban area

- **Large no of smart phone users:** The number of smart phone users in India was estimated to reach over 748 million in 2020, with the number of smart phone users worldwide forecasted to exceed to 1.5 billion users in 2040.
- **High speed internet:** The advancement in Internet speed technology hascaptured a major share of all transactions and shopping done by consumers.
- **Rising trend of dual-career couples:** Couples residing in urban area are adopting dual career concept where both are focused towards working professionally. This in turn has led to increase in income and standard of living.
- **High literacy:** Literacy rate is higher as compared to urban areas. Consumers with high literacy rate has better understanding of technology for shopping online.

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positive impact of personal care on self-esteem and social interaction are the drivers of personal care products. Consumer's online shopping experience has resulted into shift from local to branded purchase of personal care products. This research will typically try to understand consumer experience of personal care products while shopping online. How a consumer feels after purchasing a product, helps to understand the satisfaction level of consumers and their overall perception.

Many researches have already been done on Personal care products but this research will give an insight how a consumer gets involved emotionally and rationally while purchasing personal care products. Also help to understand that a good consumer experience is the key to successful business.

4. NEED/SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

In 2021, approximately a third of the total population in India lives in cities. There is an increase of urbanization by almost 4 percent in the last decade, meaning people have moved away from rural areas to find work and make a living in the cities.

Urban consumer needs and demands have been changing drastically. There has been substantial demand of personal care products from urban area with growing awareness about maintaining hygiene and grooming. The study will help to know the consumer experience towards online shopping of personal care products via Smart Phone sin Palghar district. Also, it will help to know reasons for shopping personal care products.

The main highlight of the study will be to understand experiences of consumers and their satisfaction via Smart Phones from E-commerce companies selling personal care products. All this will help E-commerce companies to design effective marketing strategies to target urban consumers.

5. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

a. **Consumer:** A person who purchases goods and services for personal use.

b. **Online shopping:** The action or activity of buying goods or services over theinternet.

c. **E-commerce:** Commercial transaction conducted electronically on the internet.

d. **Smart phone:** A cell Phone that functions like a computer.

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- **Convenience shopping**: consumers in urban area hardly get time for shopping offline due to hectic work schedules. Online shopping gives them the opportunity to shop at their convenience 24*7.
- **Online discounts**: E-commerce companies provide end number of discounts and offers for limited period to induce the consumers to make purchase decision.
- **Rare finds**: Consumers can shop for the products which are not available in local markets. Also, few companies launch their products only online especially for online shoppers
- **Variety of products**: Online shopping offers wide variety of products to choose
- **Same day delivery**: Many e-commerce companies provide same day delivery so that they don't loose on the consumers who needs a particular product same day.

2. PROFILE OF STUDY AREA

The part of the country's largest urban sea-hill of Thane District divisioned on 1st August 2014 or 36th new district Palghar came into existence. Palghar is the 36th district of the state. It is spread between the west coast of the Arabian Sea and the Sahyadri Mountains rows that are east of the Northern District of Palghar. Palghar DISTRICT total population is around 29, 90,116. The district has a total of 8 talukas, Mokhada, Talasari, Vasai, Vikramgad, Palghar, Dahanu and Wada. Palghar DISTRICT has 4, 69,699 hectares of the total geographical area in a total. In District the literacy rate is 66.65% and Male percentage is 72.23% and female literacy rate is 59.28%.The research will be conducted in urban areas of Vasai, Palghar and Dahanu Taluka. As per the general observation of the researcher, a large number of consumers from this urban area shop Personal Care products online on regular and on special occasions as these areas are closely connected to Mumbai City and the lifestyle is influenced by people living in Mumbai City.

3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Consumer is said to be the king in marketing. Understanding consumer preferences, likes and dislikes is the key to any business. Consumer behaviour with respect to online shopping of Personal Care products is tremendously changing in urban areas. Consumers today are more aware about their appearance which is one of the biggest reason for the expansion of personal care products. High standard of living,

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e. **FMCG: Fast-moving consumer goods:** Cheaper products that sell quickly such as milk, gum, fruit and vegetables, soda, beer, and common drugs like aspirin.

f. **Personal care products:** Personal care or toiletries are consumer products usedin personal hygiene, personal grooming or for beautification.

g. **Urban marketing**: Urban marketing would be any marketing strategy that bestreaches an urban population, such as those people who reside in large cities or towns.

h. **Digitalisation:** The conversion of text, pictures, or sound into a digital form thatcan be processed by a computer.

i. **Internet penetration:** The relationship between the number of Internet users ineach country and its demographic data.

j. **Consumer experience:** Customer experience is the sum total of customers satisfaction and feelings resulting from interactions with a brand's products andservices.

6. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To evaluate the factors influencing online shopping via Smart Phones for Personal Care Products in Palghar district.

2. To garner an Overview of Online Personal Care Industry in International and National Context.

3. To find the problems associated with online shopping of Personal Care Productsvia Smart Phones in Palghar district.

4. To understand consumer satisfaction towards online shopping via Smart Phonesfor Personal Care Products in Palghar District.

5. To assess out Brand preferences of online consumers for Personal Care Productsvia Smart Phones in Palghar District.

6. To analyse Brand Loyalty towards Personal Care Products in Palghar Districtvia Smart Phones

7. To offer Suggestions and Recommendations to Online Portals for developing Marketing Strategies.

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7. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES STATEMENT

Hypothesis -1

$H1_0$ = Demographic variables and customer satisfaction for online shopping of Personal Care Products are independent of each other.

$H1_1$ = Demographic variables and customer satisfaction for online shopping of Personal Care Products are not independent of each other.

Hypothesis - 2

$H2_0$ = Demographic variables and Brand Preferences on online shopping of Personal Care Products are independent of each other.

$H2_1$= Demographic variables and Brand Preferences on online shopping of Personal Care Products are not independent of each other.

Hypothesis - 3

$H3_0$ = Demographic variables and Brand Loyalty of consumers via online shopping of Personal Care Products are independent of each other.

$H3_1$= Demographic variables and Brand Loyalty of consumers via online shopping of Personal Care Products are not independent of each other.

8. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1) The Sample size will be limited to 1000 Respondents
2) The study will be conducted in among the households of Palghar District, Maharashtra.
3) Findings will be limited to the analysis made based on facts and figures found by primary data.
4) Study will be conducted in urban areas of Vasai, Palghar and Dahanu Tahsil.
5) Data will be collected only from consumers who are involved in online shopping via Smart Phones only in urban area of Palghar

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9. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

9.1 Type of Research:

Descriptive research design will be used where focus will be on survey and fact finding enquiries through structured questionnaire. This research will be a qualitative and quantitative research as it will allow the researcher to examine the relationship among variables.

9.2 Type and Source of Data

The present study will be based on primary data and secondary data.

The primary data will be collected by structured questionnaire. The data will be collected from consumers using smart phones for online shopping of Personal Care Products. Close ended questions will be asked in the questionnaire to get the answers of those questions, which are related to the objectives laid down in the study. **Secondary data** will be collected from various websites, reports and research papers.

9.3 Sampling Method

The study will focus on consumer experience of online shopping in urban area of Palghar District with special reference to Personal Care Products. The researcher will collect data through structured questionnaire from 1000 respondents those who are involved in online shopping through smart phone in urban area of Palghar District.Therefore Judgemental and convenience sampling will be used.

9.4 Statistical Tools:

In this Study, the researcher will use various statistical tools like Chi Square test of independent attribute, Z test, Correlation, Regression and appropriate tools etc. The analysis will be done with the help of SPSS or Mega stats software. The data will be presented in suitable Graphs and Diagrams.

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10. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Anu Jose, (2016): Perception and buying behaviour of modern women towards personal care products: The study contributes significant research about consumer behaviour and perception. The findings say that today there are lot of environmental concerns and consumers are also very conscious and aware about using eco-friendly products. These category of consumers are mostly female, married, with a child stayingat home. The study says that companies are not paying attention to ecological aspect. Considering the environment is very important.

Binil V Raja, (2019) :Thesis titled:An Analysis on the role of Smart Phones in online buying behaviour of customers in Kerala : This Study considers Smart Phonesas a new mini-computer. The study reveals that smart phones have taken over computers. With ever growing technology, smart phones are developing at a fast pace.This change in technology has drastically changed consumer shopping behaviour. It haslargely influenced the shopping habit of consumers. Secondary data gives informationabout how consumers have shifted to online shopping using smart phones. Therefore there is a wide scope of online shopping using Smart phones.

Daroch, Nagrath, & Gupta, (2021): A paper titled "**A study on factors limiting online shopping behaviour of consumers**" aims to find out the problems that consumers face during their shopping through online stores. The findings of the study state that total six factors came out from the study that restrains consumers to buy fromonline sites – fear of bank transaction and faith, traditional shopping more convenient than online shopping, reputation and services provided, experience, insecurity and insufficient product information and lack of trust.

Deshmukh & Chourasia, (2020): A study titled "**A Comparative Analysis on the Problems Faced by Rural and Urban Customers in Online Shopping: With SpecialReference to Chhindwara District**" aims to to measure the problems faced by rural &urban consumers while purchasing product through online. The data was collected from240 consumers who have experienced online shopping. Out of 240 respondents 97 werefrom rural area and 143 were from Urban area. Convenient & Stratified Sampling techniques were used for sample selection. The findings of the study states that rural consumers prefer to purchase clothes followed by books, sports

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goods & fitness products, accessories etc. whereas urban consumers prefer to purchase clothes, followed by books, accessories beauty products & apparel, sports goods & fitness products etc. Almost both the consumers purchase similar goods in online mode. Ruralconsumers purchase goods from Flipkart followed by Amazon whereas urban consumers purchase goods from Flipkart followed by Amazon, Myntra, Snapdeal etc. Rural consumers face problem while shopping online are additional charges / hidden charges followed by lack of personalized services, unclear return and guarantee policies whereas problems faced by urban consumers are additional charges / hidden charges followed by difficulties in e-payment, unclear return and guarantee policies, lack of personalized services, lack of cyber security, website is not user friendly etc. So additional charges/hidden charges on products is the most important problem faced byconsumers in rural & urban areas. The study concludes that respondents have favourable attitude towards online shopping.

Kameshwara Rao Poranki, (2015): A thesis titled, Consumer Attitude and Perception on Personal Care Products and cosmetics at Vishakapatnam, India: The study concludes that Consumers today are brand conscious while purchasing Personal care products and cosmetics. He also suggests the companies to pay more attention to advertising, marketing and positive word of mouth publicity. Brand loyalty is highly affected by the perception of consumers which is useful in consumer decision making. Visual merchandising is extremely important in the decision making when consumers are evaluating alternatives. The study also gives us comparison of consumer's international and national which concludes that consumers expect good quality and service. The study is specifically about indigenous products.

Kaur, (2018): A thesis titled "**Online purchase behaviour of rural and urban consumers in Punjab a comparative study**" aims to understand and analyse the onlinepurchase behaviour and pattern of the rural and urban consumers. The study also aim to find out the factors motivating them and barriers stopping them make onlinepurchases. Data was collected from 700 urban and rural online consumers' i.e. 350 eachfrom both the segments. The study reveals that the rural online consumers differ from urban online consumers with respect to time period of usage of internet, ability to use internet, time spent on web surfing, time of last online purchase, frequency of visiting websites for special offers and discounts, getting carried away

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by heavy discounts, brands purchased online, satisfaction with online shopping experience, visit to store to see the product before purchasing online, place of accessing internet, device being used to access internet, websites visited, etc. Significant difference has been found with respect to the motivating factors - website features, product information and promotional features among the rural and urban respondents. There is significant difference in the purchase behaviour of rural and urban respondents with respect to thebarriers - payment related hassles, technical hassles and product related barriers. Both the rural and the urban consumers in Punjab are found to be satisfied after making online purchases if their expectations are met; and both sets of consumers have agreedto feel cognitive dissonance after making online purchases if their expectations are notmet.

Pagar, Patil, Aurangabadkar, & Sawale, (2021): A paper titled "**An Analytical Study on Rural Consumer Buying Behaviour toward Online Shopping With Special Reference to Nashik District**" Reveals the various parameters which influences online shopping. It is a descriptive research design. Data was collected from120 respondents of 5 Talukas of Nasik District using random sampling and purposive sampling technique. Findings of the study reveal that most of the respondents were aware about online shopping as well as they use it. Availability of wide range of products is the main factor influencing rural consumers to by online. Absence of Physical Connect with the product acts as the most discouraging factor which refrains the consumer to for buying the products online.

PrinciGupta,Padma Misrab,(2017):A Study on Consumer Buying Behaviour for Personal Care Products This study considers that Indian market has large share for personal care products like skin creams, shampoo, soap, hair oil and beauty products are the most important category. Hence, segmentation is necessary for creating a nationwide brand for personal care products. He also firmly believes that companies should have a product portfolio to reduce the cost so that it can establish itself in the Indian market.

Many Studies have been done on Consumer behaviour of online shopping from various angle about gender and shopping, consumer perception, consumer decision making process,consumer behaviour of modern women etc. There is no specific studydone on Consumer Experience of Online Shopping via Smart Phones with special reference to Palghar district.

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11. CHAPTER SCHEME

Chapter 1: Introduction:

This chapter deals with the general introduction about the topic. It highlights the Objectives and Hypothesis behind conducting this research. It clarifies the Limitations, Methodology adopted, Scope and Importance of the study.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature:

This chapter includes the substance of the researches done earlier on the similar topic by research scholars. It gives clear idea about topics covered earlier about the same subject. It includes data from published and unpublished articles pertaining consumer behaviour towards online shopping.

Chapter 3: Profile of study area:

Information about study area which will be very important from study point of view.

Chapter 4: Overview of online shopping of Personal care products inInternational and National Context.:

This Chapter will include the marketing scenario of online Personal Care Industry at of domestic and global platform.

Chapter 5: Data Analysis and Interpretations:

This chapter will include data analysis in the form of tables and graphs along with interpretations. It will also include result of hypotheses testing along with its interpretation.

Chapter 6: Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations:

This chapter discusses the findings of the study undertaken by the researcher. This is with reference to the hypothesis. The entire hypothesis will be evaluated on the basis of data collected by the researcher and wherever required graphs and tables containing

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data will be produced. Conclusions will be followed by findings. Recommendations will be given on the basis of the entire study.

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URAN COLLEGE OF COMMERCE & ARTS KONKAN GYANPEETH'S URAN-RAIGAD

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In continuation of this office letter No. Th./ICD/2022-23/4299,dated 24th March, 2023, I am to inform you that as you have complied the requirements of Research and Recognition Committee for the Board of Studies in **Commerce** for approval of the topic of thesis for **Ph.D.(Commerce & Management)** degree in the subject of **Business Policy & Administration**, you are allowed to register for the said degree in the subject of **Business Policy & Administration**, subject to the intake capacity of the Department/College/Institute.

The title is as follows:

"A Study on Consumer Experience of Online Shopping Via Smart Phones in Urban Area for Personal Care Products"

Hence, you are allowed to register for the **Ph.D.(Commerce & Management)** degree in **Business Policy & Administration** of the University subject to the intake capacity of the Department/College/Institute.

Please note that the student coming from other Universities are required to submit a provisional statement of eligibility issued by the Registrar of this University before seeking their admission to the course in the Departments/Colleges/Institutions.

Yours,

Deputy Registrar (Offg)
RAPC

Copy forwarded with compliments for information to :-

1. The Principal, Konkan Gyanpeeth Uran College of Commerce and Arts, Uran, **Raigad-400 702.**
2. Dr. Parag R. Karulkar, Konkan Gyanpeeth Uran College of Commerce and Arts, Uran, **Raigad-400 702.**
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